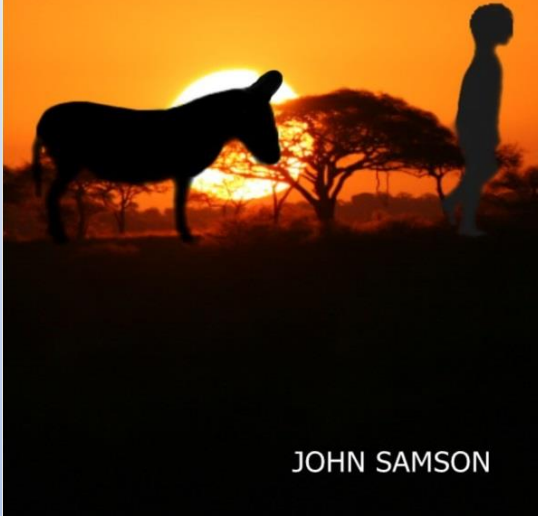


# A DONKEY CALLED ODDSOCK



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## Getting away

'We shall go to the ocean, Oddsock. They said that it is very, very big, as big as the sky.'

The donkey nodded his head, then shook it, watching the young boy, looking for guidance, a restlessness twitching in its body. He knew they should move on, get away from this place, but he was bound to the boy. They were twins, born of different mothers, he with one leg black to the knee, the only blemish on a grey coat, while the boy carried a strange pigmentation disorder that left one arm a pale pink to the elbow in contrast to the rich brown of his body, earning him the nickname of Whitearm.

Oddsock twitched his flank to dislodge a fly that was feasting on one of the many small sores that dotted his hide. He nodded his head again to try break the inertia that had settled on the boy.

'As big as the sky,' Whitearm gestured at the blue canopy overhead. There was a glazed look to his eyes, the rapture of the large sky taking his concentration and mind from what lay about him.

The remains of a hut, someone's home, still smouldered nearby. The heat of the recent fire, not quite spent, mingled with that of the morning air, wrapping its warm smoky smells around the everyday shimmer that the sun brought to the land.

'Do you know the way to the ocean, Oddsock?' the boy asked, looking across to the donkey, his eyes glowed within a dark face, smeared white with ash, the idea of the sea possessing him.

Oddsock blinked and swung his ungainly head round to try to gnaw away an itch that ate at his hide. He was agitated, but he could not go, not without the boy.

'That way?' The boy pointed in the direction Oddsock's head had turned, a grin of delight stretched across his face, dislodging some ash which floated lazily to meet the dusty ground.

The donkey swung his head back, drawn by the voice, his eyes catching the bright ones of the boy and he dipped his head impatiently. He was not comfortable being here.